

# CLARK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM

<b>Issue:</b> Report on Coroner's Inquest Process	<b>Back-up:</b>
<b>Petitioner:</b> Virginia Valentine, County Manager	<b>Clerk Ref. #</b>
<b>Recommendation:</b>  That the Board of County Commissioners receive a status report regarding the review of the coroner's inquest process; and direct staff accordingly.	

## FISCAL IMPACT:

None by this action.

## BACKGROUND:


NRS 244.163 permits Boards of County Commissioners to create the office of county coroner. Clark County has elected to do this and the duties of the coroner are articulated in Chapter 2.12 of County Code. One of the responsibilities of the coroner is to conduct coroner's inquests. This process is set forth in County Code Chapter 2.12.080.

Due to an increase in the number of police officer involved shootings, County staff was directed to meet with community stakeholders and hold public input sessions in order to gather information and review possible changes to the current coroner's inquest process.

Staff will provide a report and seek further direction on how to proceed in amending the current process.

RECEIVED AS RECOMMENDED-STAFF DIRECTED TO DRAFT ORDINANCE TO AMEND CODE INCORPORATING COMMENTS INCLUDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS 1 (SUBSTITUTING JUSTICES OF THE PEACE FOR HEARING MASTERS), 2 (BROADENING DEFINITION OF INTERESTED PARTIES) & 3A (QUESTIONS BY INTERESTED PARTIES TO CONTINUE TO BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING DURING PROCEEDING AS IS CURRENTLY DONE; AT NEXT BREAK & OUTSIDE PRESENCE OF JURY, UNASKED QUESTIONS WOULD ORALLY BE READ INTO RECORD); PERMISSIVE LANGUAGE WITH RESPECT TO AUTHORIZING ATTORNEY GENERAL'S INVOLVEMENT; LANGUAGE THAT DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S REPRESENTATION TO BE OBJECTIVE; AND ADDRESS COMMENTS OF PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE-STAFF TO POSSIBLY COME BACK WITH INFORMATION AS TO WHO SHOULD DO ACTUAL INVESTIGATION & POSSIBLY DRAFT ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE ON ASKING OF QUESTIONS ISSUE

Respectfully submitted,

  
VIRGINIA VALENTINE  
County Manager

Cleared for Agenda

10/2/07

Agenda  
Item #

140

# 140



# CORONER'S INQUEST

## Committee Recommendations

# ISSUE ONE

- Substitute Justices of the Peace for Hearing Masters.

## ISSUE TWO

- Broaden the definition of Interested Parties to include cohabitating partners, grandparents, aunts or uncles raising grandchildren, etc. Court will make determination if individual is Interested Party.

## ISSUE THREE

- Questioning by Interested Parties:

- Questions will continue to be submitted in writing during the proceeding as is currently done. At the next break and outside the presence of the jury, the unasked questions would orally be read into the record.

OR

- The family's attorney is allowed to ask follow-up questions during the middle of the proceeding in open court and in the presence of the jury, after the district attorney asks the initial questions. The officer's attorney would also be allowed to orally ask follow-up questions. This would not be cross-examination.

# **RECAP OF ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

- Substitute Justices of the Peace for Hearing Masters
- Broaden the definition of Interested Parties
- Questioning by Interested Parties